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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS UPON THE TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS OF THE REORGANIZATION OF THE LITERATURE COMPONENT OF A TEACHER-TRAINING CURRICULUM. INTERIM REPORT.

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THIS STUDY WAS AN ATTEMPT BY THE ILLINOIS STATE-WIDE CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER IN THE PREPARATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS (ISCPET) TO DETERMINE WHETHER A CHANGE IN CURRICULUM FROM A PERIOD TO A GENRE APPROACH IN THE NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT RESULTED IN TEACHERS BETTER PREPARED TO TEACH. EVALUATIONS FROM SCHOOL SUPERVISORS WERE USED TO DETERMINE SUCCESSFUL TEACHING. WHILE INSUFFICIENT EVALUATIONS OF GRADUATES UNDER THE EARLIER CURRICULUM PLAN WERE OBTAINED FOR ANY CONCLUSIVE FINDINGS ON THE HYPOTHESIS, IT DID APPEAR THAT THE CHANGE HAD HAD AT LEAST NO DELETERIOUS EFFECT ON TEACHERS PREPARED AT THE SCHOOL. AN EVALUATION OF THEIR COLLEGE PREPARATION BY THE TEACHERS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY DID INDICATE THAT A SHIFT TO THE GENRE APPROACH MUST INCLUDE ALL GENRES IF IT IS NOT TO RESULT IN GAPS IN TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AS SEEN BY THE TEACHERS. ANCILLARY TO THE MAIN STUDY, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT RANK IN CLASS AND GENERAL MENTAL ABILITY CORRELATED POSITIVELY WITH TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AS EVALUATED BY SUPERVISORS, WHILE OVERALL AND ENGLISH GRADE-POINT AVERAGES WERE CLOSE TO ZERO OR WERE NEGATIVE IN CORRELATION. PRINCIPAL VALUE OF THE STUDY WAS IN REVEALING THE NEED FOR MORE REFINED EVALUATIVE INSTRUMENTS AND FOR A LARGER POPULATION. THIS STUDY IS BEING USED, CONSEQUENTLY, AS A PILOT FOR A LARGER ISCPET STUDY INVOLVING FIVE ILLINOIS SCHOOLS AND INCORPORATING THE EXPERIENCES AND FINDINGS. (THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE (LIMITED SUPPLY, FREE) FROM ISCPET, 1210 WEST CALIFORNIA, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA, ILL. 61801.) (AUTHOR)

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A Study of the Effect Upon the Teaching Effectiveness of English Teachers of the Reorganization of the Literature Component of a Teacher-Training Curriculum

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October 1967

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and to a subcontract with the Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. Contractors and subcontractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the projects. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

North Central College
Naperville, Illinois

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INTRODUCTION

In the school year 1957-1958 the English Department of North Central College, Naperville, Illinois, accomplished a virtually complete revision of its course offerings. Previous to this time the approach to the teaching of literature was through a study of historical periods and some individual authors. The revision established three basic genres, poetry, drama, and novel, with one course in Shakespeare and two survey courses in world literature, modeled somewhat on the Great Books pattern, to complement the genre courses. For English majors a course in creative writing was available.

In 1963 a questionnaire was circulated to all North Central graduates in English, 1950-1963, seeking information and comment on the results of the education the school had provided. Certain of these comments led to the formulation of the present study. Had the revision of the curriculum in 1957 resulted in the preparation of a teacher better prepared to teach literature? It was hypothesized that those students given a genre approach to literature would, on the whole, be better prepared as teachers than those trained under the historical period approach. Evaluation reports of the graduates, secured by the Education Department of the college from the graduates' employers, would be used to determine teacher effectiveness. Appraisals of effectiveness of college training would be secured from the graduates themselves.

Following is an account of procedures followed in securing the necessary information and the use of these procedures in testing the hypothesis. The results form a part of the ISCPET attempt to improve the training of secondary school teachers of English. Since the authors of this study were unable to find any reference in the literature to similar research programs in this area of curriculum arrangement, much of the study was on a "trial and error" basis and became especially useful in indicating the directions for a larger study involving other schools in the ISCPET program.

When the Illinois State-Wide Curriculum Study Center in the Preparation of Secondary School English Teachers (ISCPET) was first established, supported by

funds supplied in accordance with a contract with the U. S. Office of Education, one of the questions proposed for answer by the twenty schools involved in the Center activities was the following: "What preparation in literature is of particular value to prospective English teachers?" Among the research proposals suggested to answer the question was the hypothesis: "Courses in periods, genres, authors, and criticism are more useful to the secondary teacher of English than are survey courses."

METHOD

In order to secure sufficient numbers to be used in the study, graduates in English of the three years prior to the effective date of the curriculum change was completely in effect were used, 1956-1958, 1961-1963.

A complete record of each graduate's college performance was secured from the Registrar of the college. This included courses taken and grades earned; grade point average for four years; rank in class at graduation; high school rank in class and high school graduated from; percentile ranking on the American Council on Education Psychological Examination.

From the English Department files, records were secured indicating the individual's rank on the Cooperative English Test or the Purdue English Test. A grade index for English courses only was calculated from the Registrar's transcript.

From the Education Department files, evaluation sheets (from school employers) were secured. These forms had been solicited by the Education Department after the first and after the second years of teaching. (Appendix A-1) A total score and a score from the content area of the evaluation form were secured; and an average score, ranging conceivably from 1 to 5 was computed for each graduate for each of the two years.

All of the information secured was entered on a record sheet developed for this study (Appendix A-2). The record sheet included in the appendix records the information for this study but was also designed for use in a larger subsequent study, hence it calls for more information than was used in this particular examination of the North Central College curriculum revision.

From the graduates of both periods a Self Appraisal of College Preparation in the Area of Literature was secured (Appendix A-3). Scores for preparation in genre and in period approaches were computed, and an overall score was calculated. Scores could range from 1 to 5. Results were recorded on the individual report forms and are tabulated in Appendix B-5.

Results were plotted on graphs (Appendix B-1 through Appendix B-4) which compared rank in college

graduating class, percentile rank on the ACE test, overall grade index and grade index in English with employers' evaluations of teaching effectiveness. A variance greater than approximately one standard deviation from the mean was considered significant for purposes of this study. The graphs of the two groups involved in the study were then compared.

RESULTS

There were 30 English majors who graduated from North Central College in the three years 1956, 1957, 1958. Of these 30, 19 had certificates to teach English. In the 1961, 1962, 1963 group, there were 39 graduates, 36 with certificates to teach English.

A major problem and weakness of the study developed, in that, due to a lack of consistent policy in previous years in the Education Department, only 4 evaluation returns were found for the 19 teachers in the 1956-1958 group. There were 21 second-year evaluation forms available for the 36 members of the 1961-1963 group.

In keeping with similar findings in studies made elsewhere, high school rank in graduating class was generally predictive of North Central College rank in graduating class, although this finding was not necessarily a part of the study. Of the 1956-1958 group of teachers (19), 12 were in the upper 1/3 of their high school class and graduated from North Central in the upper 1/3. Three from the upper 1/3 in high school dropped below that figure in college. Of the 1961-1963 group (36), 30 were upper 1/3 in high school and college ranking, while 9 were upper 1/3 in high school and below that rank in college.

When comparing college rank in class with teaching performance as rated by employing supervisors, two were average in the 1956-1958 group. One was above average and one was below average in subject competence, while 1 was above, 1 average, and 2 below average in overall effectiveness. Nine of the 21 teachers in the 1961-1963 group performed about as expected, i.e., no more than one standard deviation from the mean as roughly outlined on the scattergraph (Appendix B-1). Six performed better than expected, and 6 performed below expectation in subject competence. In overall effectiveness, 5 were above average, 5 below average, and 11 average.

Comparing teacher effectiveness as measured by employer evaluations and grade point average in English courses at North Central (Appendix B-2) gave the following results: The 1956-1958 group showed 2 above average in subject, 2 above average in overall, 1 average

in subject competence, 1 below average in subject and 2 below average in overall effectiveness. For the 1961-1963 group, 9 above average in both subject competence and overall effectiveness; 9 average in subject competence and 10 in overall effectiveness.

Comparing teacher effectiveness as measured by employer evaluations with grade point average in all work at North Central (Appendix B-3) gave the following results: For the 1956-1958 group, 3 above average in subject competence and 2 in overall effectiveness, 1 average in overall effectiveness, 1 below average in subject competence and 1 in overall effectiveness. For the 1961-1963 group the results were similar: 11 above average in subject competence and in overall effectiveness, 11 average in subject competence and 8 in overall effectiveness, 3 below average in overall effectiveness.

Relating percentile rankings on the American Council on Education Psychological Examination and ratings of teacher effectiveness by employers (Appendix B-4) gave the following statistics: The 1956-1958 group showed 3 average in subject competence and 3 in overall effectiveness, 1 below average in subject competence and 1 in overall effectiveness. For the 1961-1963 group, 4 above average in subject competence and 3 in overall effectiveness, 9 average in subject competence and 8 in overall effectiveness, 7 below average in subject competence and 9 in overall effectiveness.

Seven of the graduates of the 1956-1958 group returned appraisal forms of college effectiveness in their preparation; twenty-one of the 1961-1963 graduates returned the same forms. The earlier graduates scored 3.47 on genre, 3.78 on period, and 3.46 overall. The later graduates recorded an average score of 3.04 on the genre items, 3.27 on the period items, and 3.26 on overall items. On an item analysis the earlier graduates scored 3.29 on poetry, 4.14 on novel, 2.86 on essay, 3.71 on short story, 4.17 on drama, 3.14 on biography, and 3.14 on non-fiction. The later group scored 3.71 on poetry, 4.24 on novel, 2.43 on essay, 3.33 on short story, 3.09 on drama, 2.14 on biography, 2.62 on non-fiction.

DISCUSSION

Because of the small number of evaluations by employers of the earlier graduating class, 1956-1958, it was not possible to verify or to refute the hypothesis of the study. What few returns there were from the earlier group seemed to indicate about the same correlations as the larger number of returns from the later group. It would appear that a more sophisticated statistical study would need to be made of a larger population, preferably including students from other schools with different approaches to the teaching of literature, in order to obtain support or negation of the hypothesis.

It would also appear from the results, however, that, quite apart from the manner in which the course in English is taught, the more successful student in college, as indicated by class rank, will be the more successful teacher, as will the more intelligent student, as indicated by percentile rank on the ACE test.

It is interesting to note that gross grade point average, whether overall or in English, was not particularly useful as an indicator of success in teaching. The direction of the scattergraph (Appendix B-3) was negative in both cases. It could be inferred at this point that teaching effectiveness on the field requires a different set of abilities than does the acquiring of grades in the classroom and that some other measure of ability would be more useful in predicting success for teachers. It could also be inferred that the grading policies of the school were stringent and thus tended to depress all grades so that the just average student at North Central, from the standpoint of gross grade point average, is really more capable than his grades would indicate. Some support for this latter position might be deduced from the fact that class rank and rankings on the ACE test did show a positive direction on the scattergraph. When measured against other students in the school, in other words, the results were more what one might expect than when teaching effectiveness was measured against the absolute standard of a grade point average.

Changes in position of individual students from measure to measure were noted. Although none of the

individuals was absolutely stable, some were relatively so, always either above, below, or average, no matter what measure was used. Some few, however, were quite volatile, appearing in all three categories, depending upon the measure. This might support the inference, made previously, that teaching effectiveness is not closely enough related to any of the measures applied in this study for them to be used as absolute determiners or predicters of teacher success, though, as is also pointed out, some measures seem more useful than others.

One of the disabilities of the entire study is its reliance upon evaluations made by supervisors. The variance in interpretation of scoring, and perhaps even in the care with which the evaluation is done, makes the study somewhat subjective in nature. Evaluations by two or three persons familiar with the teacher's performance would be more reliable obviously, but it was impossible to secure this sort of information for this study.

The results of the Self Appraisal were interesting even though inconclusive. They revealed that, on the whole, the earlier graduates felt they were better prepared to teach than were the later graduates. Numbers certainly might have had some effect here since only seven of the earlier graduates, as compared to twenty one of the later, were involved in the study. Distance from a first teaching experience could also have affected the results, lending enchantment to the college days.

Quite important, however, was the item analysis, revealing that the earlier graduates felt they were well prepared in all genres, while the later graduates seemed to be able to identify more precisely a particular genre in which they were weak. Of special significance to the North Central College English Department was the fact that the lowest scores of the later graduates were in essay, biography, and non-fiction (2.43, 2.14, and 2.62). In setting up the genre approach, staffing had made it impossible to include a course or courses in literary prose (which would presumably include these weak areas), and the result is rather apparent statistically. Certainly this contributed substantially to the fact noted above that earlier graduates rated their overall preparation higher than the later graduates did.

Of equal significance was the fact that in the two genres in which the later graduates felt better prepared than did the earlier graduates, i.e., novel and poetry, the faculty persons teaching in those areas have been on the staff throughout the period covered by the study. It is not beyond reason to assume that one person specializing in a genre may become expert enough to bring about noticeable and even statistically significant changes in the ability of students to function as teachers in those genres after graduation.

Rather incidental to the purpose of the study, but of possible significant value to any English department, is that the switch from a period to a genre approach made it possible to readily identify weak areas in the course offerings of the school as indicated by the graduates' self appraisals of their college preparation. When the teaching of the various forms of literature is scattered in a number of different courses, any weakness in a particular form tends to be obscured. If a college has the means to correct a weakness, the genre approach at least makes its identification much more possible.

It is perhaps also possible to suggest that, if all courses in a genre are taught by one teacher, the genre approach in a smaller school has an inherent strength (or weakness, as the case may be). In effect, the approach becomes a form of teacher appraisal as well as an appraisal of college preparation. What the result would be in a larger school (or in a smaller institution, for that matter) where several teachers handle each genre would be harder to identify, but particular areas of strength and weakness could still be singled out.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

No definite answer to the hypothesis of the study was discovered due to limitations in the data available which appeared as the study progressed. It became apparent that a more selective and definitive evaluation form was needed to verify or disprove the hypothesis and that evaluation reports from several observers would be more useful and reliable. It could be said that the change in curriculum at least had no measurably bad effects on teaching effectiveness.

Somewhat incidental to the purpose of the study, it appeared that rank in class and percentile rank on the ACE test were fairly reliable indicators of future teacher effectiveness. Gross grade point averages were not.

The difficulty of obtaining an objective answer to the hypothesis of this study is made more apparent by the study. However, that answer would still seem to be a valid and especially pertinent goal to seek if possible. If larger numbers of teachers were used, more schools involved, more accurate instruments devised, and a wider range of measures applied, it would seem that results might be obtained which would allow for generalization and might support or negate the hypothesis. If different approaches to the teaching of English at the college level could be compared, perhaps using results from several different schools, some directions might be indicated. In fact, as a result of this study, a more ambitious program, involving five schools, was proposed and set up incorporating the experience of this study and attempting to solve some of the problems that it revealed.

Certainly the cry from the high schools for teachers better prepared to teach indicates the importance of any and every possible effort to ascertain those methods of approach to teacher training at the undergraduate level which will be most effective. This particular study has benefited North Central College's English Department in helping to reveal problem areas in its teacher training program. The compilation of the statistics served the department in discovering facts about its program and the assumptions underlying that program. The most

challenging fact discovered concerned the assumption that the course offerings that had been included were adequately covering all of the genre areas needed in teaching English in the high school. The study revealed that this assumption was not well grounded and suggested definite directions for change in the program. Any department, in any college, faced with the problem of verification of the assumptions of its educational philosophy could benefit from the sort of study made possible by this ISCPET grant.

SUMMARY

This study was an attempt to determine whether a curriculum change effected in the English Department of North Central College in 1957-1958 has resulted in improved teacher effectiveness of graduates as measured by evaluations provided by the supervisors or by the principals of the graduates in the field. It was hypothesized that the change to a genre approach to literature would give a prospective teacher better preparation than the period approach which had been used previously at the college. Statistics were compiled on two groups of students -- 19 who graduated in 1956-1958 and 36 who graduated in 1961-1963. It was discovered that, due to the small number of evaluations of the earlier graduates, no real proving or disproving of the hypothesis could be made.

Some correlations between teacher effectiveness and the objective data were noted for the later graduating group. These findings were of interest and possible significance to the English Department of the college in future training of teachers.

Some possibilities of the genre approach in identifying strengths and weaknesses in course presentations were indicated.

Shortcomings of the study served to point up the need for a larger program with more carefully controlled statistical sources and more refined evaluative instruments. It would appear that the genre approach at least has done no worse in preparing effective teachers, but, if possible, the hypothesis still needs to be supported or negated for future guidance in teacher training programs in English.

Appendix A-1

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS

TEACHER EVALUATION SCALE

Name of Teacher _____

Name of Principal or Superintendent _____

School _____ Address _____

Personal Qualities:	High				Low
1. Intelligence (judgment, foresight)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Reliability (promptness, dependability, conscientiousness, sense of responsibility)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Emotional stability (professional poise, even temper)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Initiative (originality, creativeness, resourcefulness)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Attractiveness (appearance, dress, manner)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Considerateness (courtesy, tact, sympathy)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Enthusiasm (interest)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Adaptability	1	2	3	4	5
9. Sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5
10. Voice (modulation, expressiveness, use of English)	1	2	3	4	5
11. Health (vitality, energy, drive)	1	2	3	4	5
Professional Knowledge, Skills, Attitude:					
1. Knowledge of subject matter (breadth and accuracy of knowledge, scholarship, interest in subject)	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix A-1 (continued)

Teacher Evaluation Scale - 2

2. Professional attitudes (interest in teaching, open-mindedness, cooperation, receptivity to criticism)	1 2 3 4 5
3. Knowledge of principles and techniques of teaching	1 2 3 4 5
4. Understanding of pupil growth and development	1 2 3 4 5
5. Skill in deciding on appropriate objectives	1 2 3 4 5
6. Skill in using a variety of instructional materials (resources, equipment, textbooks, other materials)	1 2 3 4 5
7. Skill in selecting and planning a variety of appropriate learning activities	1 2 3 4 5
8. Skill in directing learning activities	1 2 3 4 5
9. Skill in teacher-pupil relationships (including discipline, working with individual pupils)	1 2 3 4 5
10. Skill in classroom management (keeping of records accurately and neatly)	1 2 3 4 5
11. Skill in evaluating pupil achievement	1 2 3 4 5

Descriptive statement of teacher (including estimate of probable success as a teacher):

_____

Signature

_____

Position

Appendix A-2

STUDY RECORD SHEET

Name:

Address:

School:

Employer:

High School (from):

High School Rank	
IQ or ≡	
ACT	
SAT	
ETS #1	
ETS #2	
MTAI	
Watson Glaser	
GRE	
GRE L and L	
College Class Rank	
Overall Grade Index	
Hrs. of English (incl. Methods)	
English Grade Index	

Appendix A-2 (continued)

Study Record Sheet - 2

1st Year Supervisor	
2nd Year Supervisor	
1st Year Self Appraisal	
2nd Year Self Appraisal	
Grad. School Grade	

Appendix A-3

TEACHER'S SELF APPRAISAL OF

COLLEGE PREPARATION IN AREA OF LITERATURE

Name: Teaching at:

Below is presented a variety of statements pertaining to the preparation your college gave you to teach literature. Rate each of the statements from 0 (very poor) to 5 (excellent) with 3 being considered average.

1. ___ Ability to teach poetry.
2. ___ Ability to relate literature to historical periods in which it was written.
3. ___ Ability to show relationships between literature and life.
4. ___ Ability to deal with philosophical premises underlying the literature.
5. ___ Ability to teach the novel.
6. ___ Ability to deal with psychological premises underlying the literature.
7. ___ Ability to communicate own concern for literature to students.
8. ___ Ability to teach the essay.
9. ___ Ability to assign and handle book reports.
10. ___ Ability to locate and utilize literary materials other than textbooks.
11. ___ Ability to evaluate critically the literature textbooks provided.
12. ___ Ability to teach the short story.
13. ___ Ability to suggest or advise on new texts or materials in literature.
14. ___ Ability to adapt literature materials to the pace and abilities of the students.

Appendix A-3 (continued)

Teacher's Self Appraisal - 2

15. ___ Ability to adapt literature assignments to students.

16. ___ Ability to teach drama.

17. ___ Ability to converse and share with other teachers of literature.

18. ___ Ability to utilize techniques other than lecture for instruction.

19. ___ Ability to organize literature materials coherently for presentation to class over a period of weeks.

20. ___ Ability to teach biography.

21. ___ Ability to arouse interest in literature generally.

22. ___ Ability to relate literature to other subjects taught in the school.

23. ___ Ability to teach non-fiction.

24. ___ Ability to arouse new ideas in students.

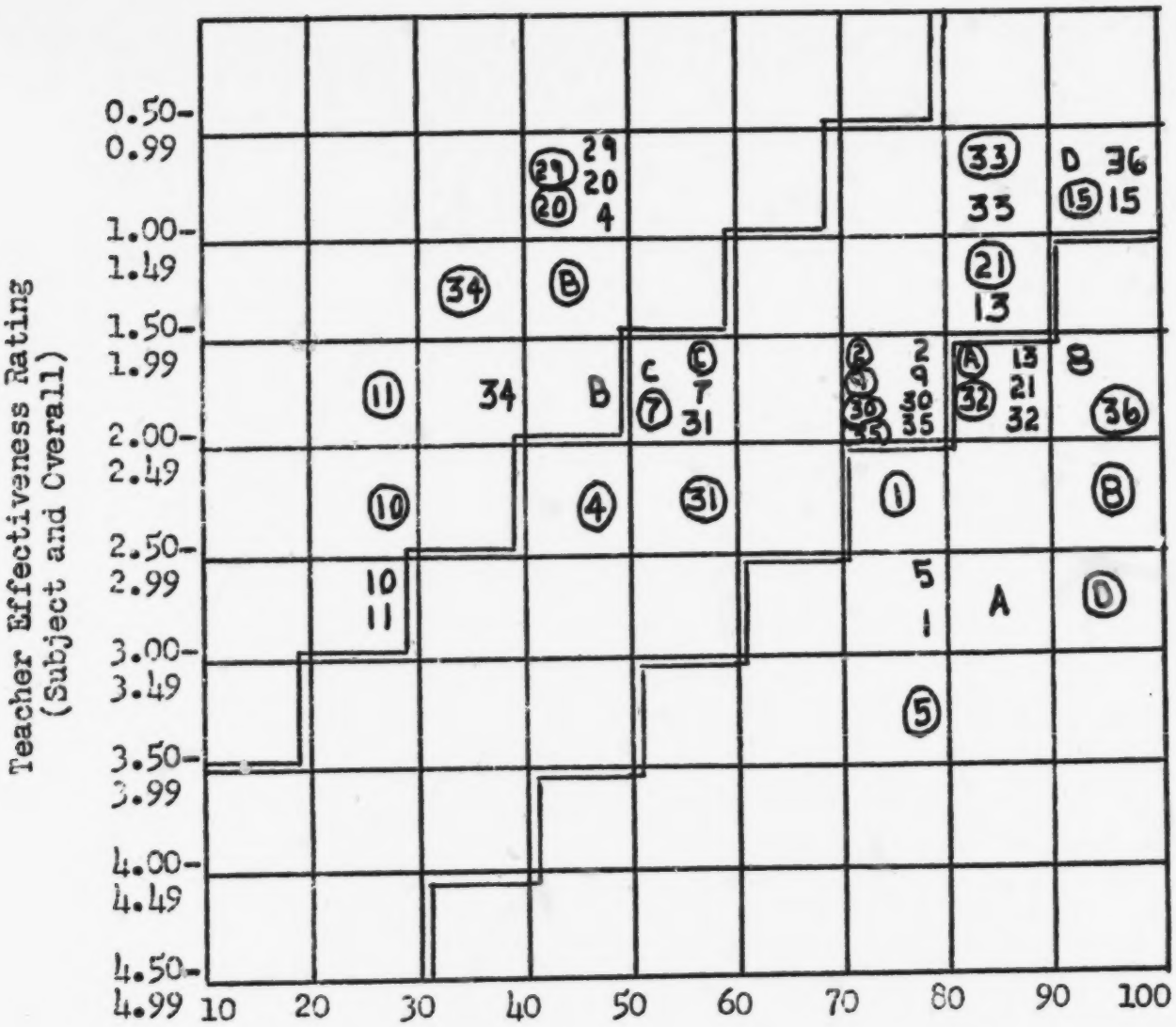
25. ___ Ability to arouse interest in literature other than American.

26. ___ Ability to arouse creative talents in students.

Appendix B-1

CLASS RANK RELATED TO

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE ENGLISH MAJORS



Subject rating, 1956-1958 A Overall rating, 1956-1958 (A)

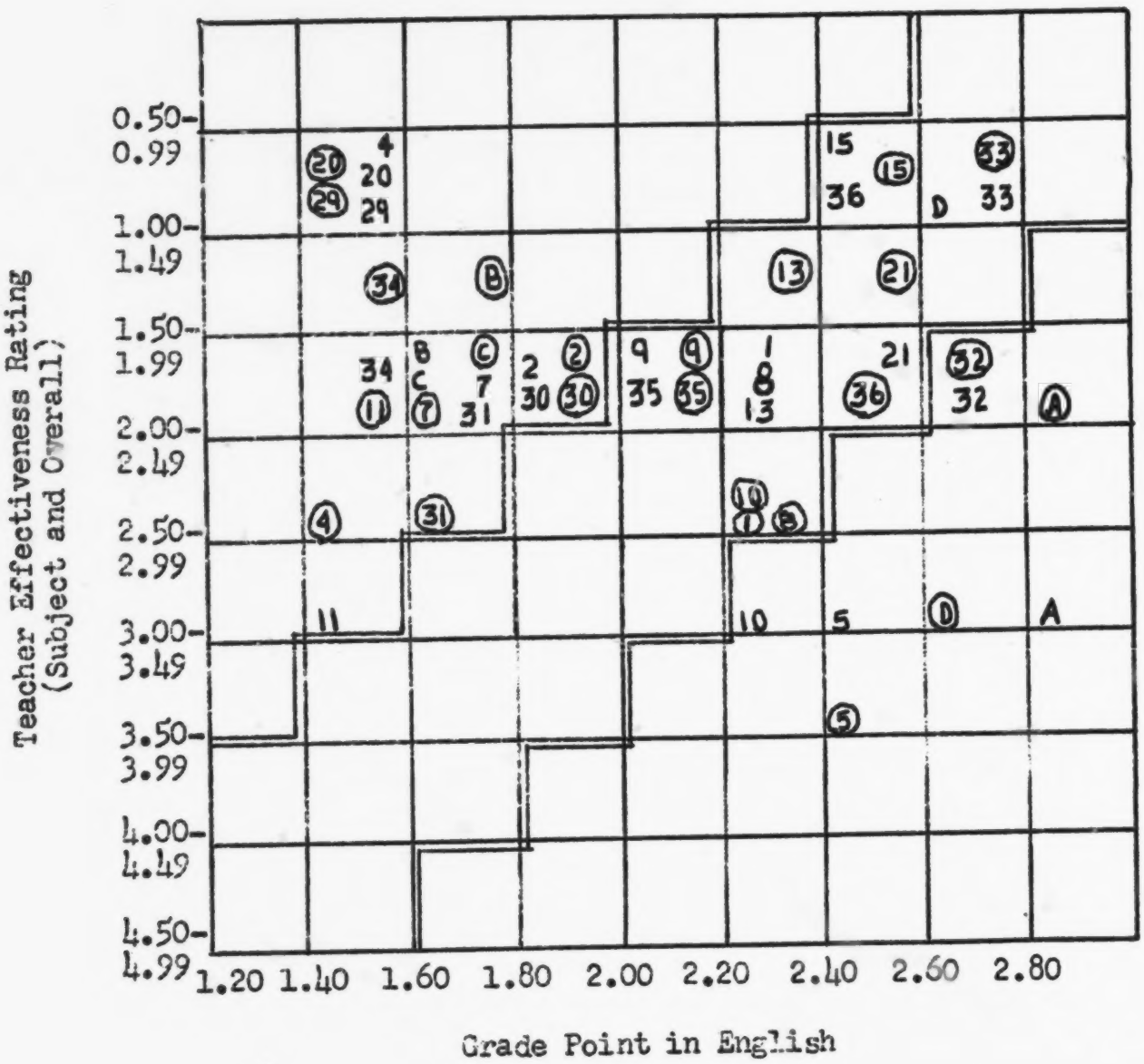
Subject rating, 1961-1963 I Overall rating, 1961-1963 (I)

(Scores outside the double lines are approximately one standard deviation above or below the mean. Each number refers to an individual of the later graduating group included in the study; each letter refers to an individual of the earlier graduating group. Each individual, in both groups, will thus appear at two locations on graphs B-1 through B-4.)

Appendix B-2

GRADE POINT IN ENGLISH RELATED TO

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE ENGLISH MAJORS



Subject rating, 1956-1958 A

Subject rating, 1961-1963 I

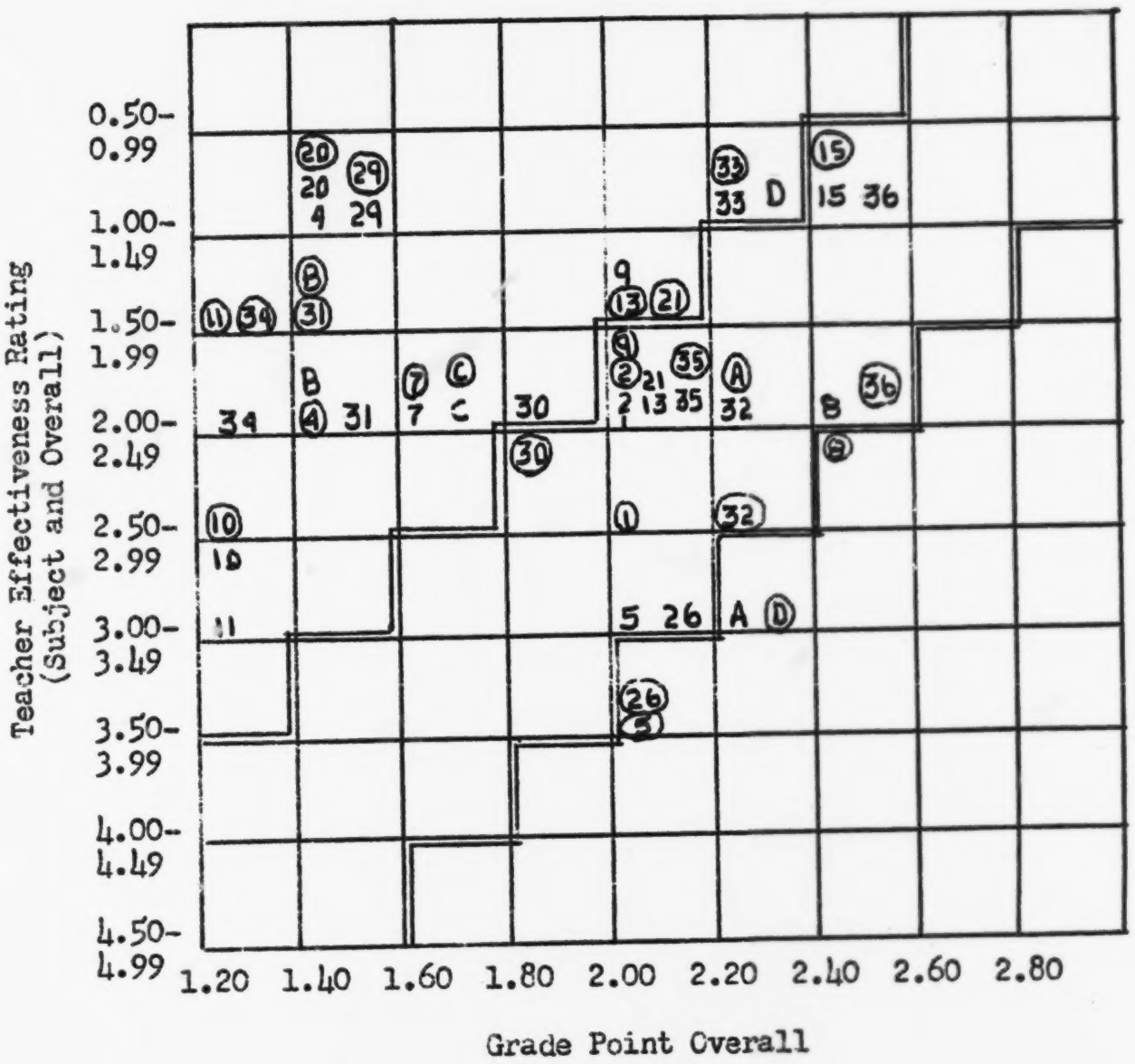
Overall rating, 1956-1958 (A)

Overall rating, 1961-1963 (I)

Appendix B-3

OVERALL GRADE POINT AVERAGE RELATED TO

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE ENGLISH MAJORS



Subject rating, 1956-1958 A

Subject rating, 1961-1963 I

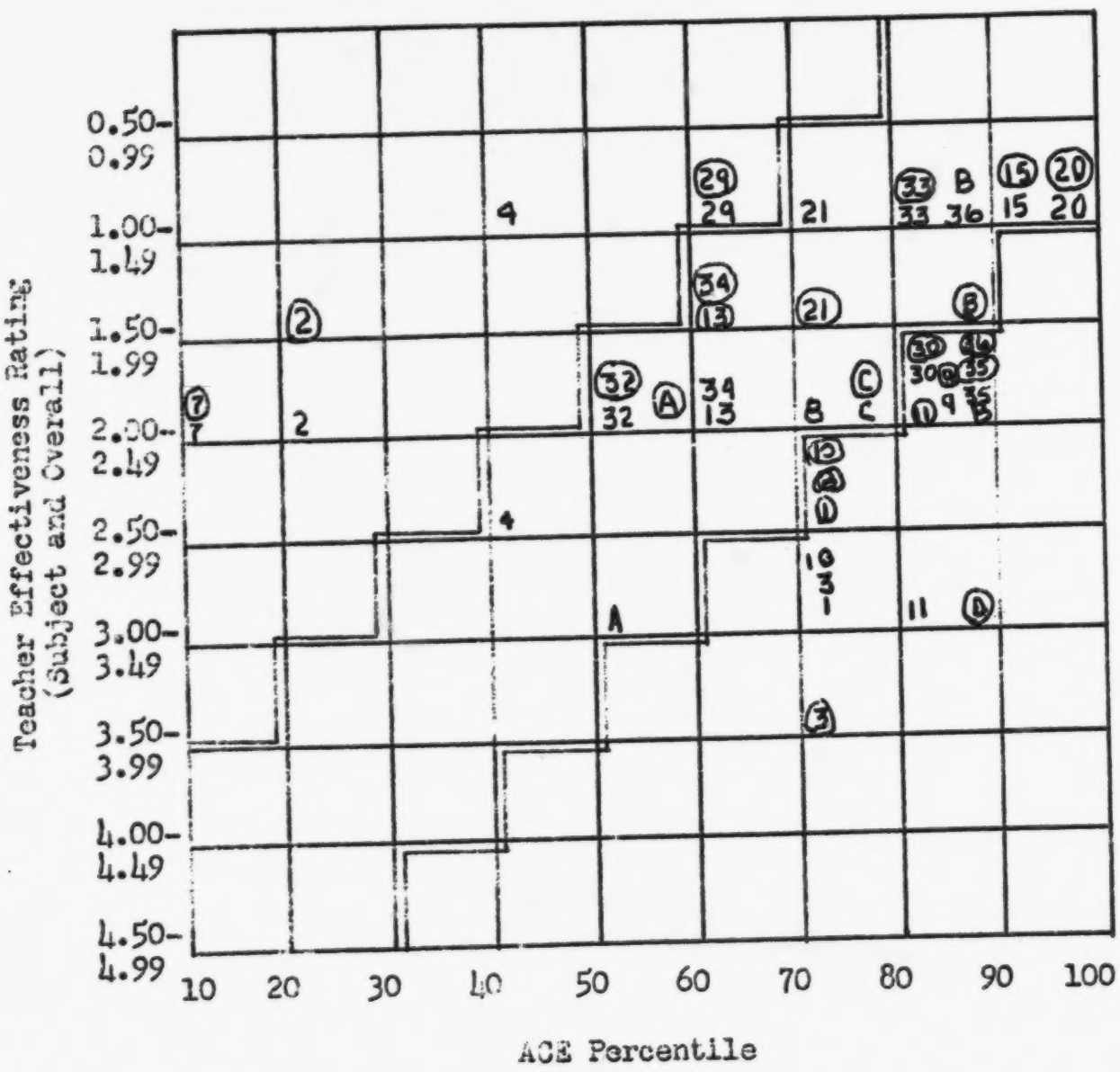
Overall rating, 1956-1958 (A)

Overall rating, 1961-1963 (I)

Appendix B-4

PERCENTILE RANK ON THE (1946) ACE TEST RELATED TO

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS OF NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE ENGLISH MAJORS



Subject rating, 1956-1958 A

Subject rating, 1961-1963 I

Overall rating, 1956-1958 (A)

Overall rating, 1961-1963 (I)

Appendix B-5

GRADUATES' SELF APPRAISAL OF EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLEGE PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

	1956-1958	1961-1963
Overall Effectiveness	3.46	3.26
Historical Periods	3.78	3.27
Genre	3.47	3.04
Essay	2.86	2.43
Short Story	3.71	3.33
Biography	3.14	2.14
Drama	4.17	3.09
Non-Fiction	3.14	2.62
Poetry	3.29	3.71
Novel	4.14	4.24

Appendix C

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